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IMPORTANT NOTICE I

All Scientific Papers submitted for Publication must be Typewritten.
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NOTICE.

The State Society meets in San Francisco April 17th, 18th and 19th. This will be the Semi-Centennial year and the meeting will be an unusually good one.

Two exceedingly interesting documents from county societies have reached the office during the past month; both relate to "contract" or "lodge" practice. Elsewhere we print a statement of attack and reply, from the local papers of Shasta County; the dignified attitude which that county society has assumed is to be highly commended. It seems but natural that educated physicians should object to being classed as wholesale merchants whose services are to be doled out at 10 cents per head. From Los Angeles came the bulletin of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, giving the program for the month and containing some interesting announcements. (Incidentally, in passing, it is to be noted that the association met every Friday during January; this plan of weekly meetings, advocated by Dr. McCormack, is a most valuable one, and every county society should arrange for such meetings and for more systematic work.) The members of the Los Angeles County Association were, recently, asked to vote upon the question of approval or disapproval of "contract or lodge practice." The result of the ballot is certainly startling. Approximately 150 ballots were cast (not a majority of the membership)

and of these, nearly half (about 73) voted in favor of "lodge practice"! To those members of the Los Angeles County Association who voted in favor of this disgraceful class of practice, we earnestly commend a careful study of the Shasta County Society statement, of Dr. McCormack's report on conditions in California, and of the general condition of physicians in a large part of the eastern and central portion of the United States, where the average fee for medical attendance is less than 50 cents—which result has been brought about largely, if not wholly, through "contract and lodge practice."

We, in California, have always enjoyed a measure of prosperity unknown to many states for a generation or more. As a result of good fees, the people of our state are served by physicians who are probably somewhat above the general average of the whole country, in ability and in up-to-date-ness, so to speak. But the handwriting is on the wall, and if we do not take heed to it and be guided by the message given us, before we know it our period of prosperity will have ended, and the people of the state will have less competent physicians; for a poorly supported doctor is not an up-to-date doctor, and sooner or later becomes a danger to the community. How would you like to practice medicine at the rate of 50 cents per office visit, and dispense the medicine? That is the case in some sections of the east and it will be the case here, if the "contract practice" evil is to be allowed to grow and develop unchecked. "Lodge practice" spells hasty, inefficient, cheap work to-day, smaller fees to-morrow, and poverty the day after. Is this the condition of affairs which the medical profession of this state wishes to see brought about? If so, then let us do as we have been doing—nothing. In San Francisco there are two old, large and wealthy "dollar a month" institutions, which, together probably represent an accumulation of approximately two millions of dollars. *Every dollar of this accumulated wealth has been paid out of the pockets of California physicians.* Within the last two years a score of contract societies or companies have been started which undertake to furnish medical or surgical attendance—of a sort—to anyone for the small sum of 50 cents per month. Several so-called "lodges" or "fraternal societies"—notably the Eagles and the Foresters—have spread over the state, have arranged to get their medical service from some physician in each community for a fixed—and generally small—sum, and are growing rich. Every dollar in the treasury of these "lodges" is paid out of the pockets of the physicians in our state. In the long run, however, it is the people who suffer the most, for they receive just about the sort of medical attendance that they pay for, when they "go up against" this lodge practice game.